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pas un chapitre où l'on n'ait mis à profit les résultats acquis par la science et la critique contemporaines" (p. vii). The method adopted by Hurter, says M. Luchaire, will always produce the same results; "c'est-à-dire à faire un livre qui se consulte, mais ne se lit pas. Or je tenais, avant tout, à être lu. Il s'agissait, pour moi, non d'être utile à quelques douzaines d'érudits, mais de donner au public soucieux du passé, dans un ouvrage de format commode et d'exposition courante, la claire intelligence de ce que fut, au moyen âge, l'action d'un grand pape. Je n'ai jamais eu d'autre objectif, et celui-ci suffit à mon ambition" (p. ix). The ambition was realized.

EDWARD B. KREHBIEL.

*The Black Death of 1348 and 1349.* By FRANCIS AIDAN GASQUET, D.D., Abbot President of the English Benedictines. Second Edition. (London: George Bell and Sons. 1908. Pp. xxv, 272.)

THIS interesting monograph is practically a reprint of the author's *Great Pestilence of 1348-1349*, published in 1893. The title has been popularized; for the term "Black Death", as applied to the pestilence in England, is no older than the nineteenth century; but the text shows no important changes. Since the publication of the original work, the cause of the transmission of bubonic plagues has been discovered, through observations in the plague-stricken districts of India, to be the rat-flea. In his preface to the second edition, the author accepts this discovery for the plague of 1348-1349.

No one except the horror-stricken contemporaries has ever described the symptoms of this dread disease and its awful fatality more graphically than our author. It would seem, however, that he is sometimes too prone to accept the exaggerated statements of terrified contemporaries at their face value: for example, that 100,000 perished in each of the cities Siena, Florence and Venice; but in his account of the plague in England he usually proceeds with greater caution. He has certainly made diligent use of contemporary documents: such as the institutions to vacant benefices, in the episcopal registers; the preferments to livings controlled by the crown, recorded in the patent rolls; and, to a less extent, the *inquisitiones post mortem* and the court rolls. His conclusions as regards the mortality of the clergy seem sound. Fully half may have perished, but it does not therefore follow, as he assumes, that half of the laity perished. For more than any other class the clergy, in visiting the sick and administering the last sacrament, came in contact with the plague-stricken, and were therefore more liable to infection.

The last chapter, devoted to the consequences of the mortality, is the least satisfactory of all. This is particularly true of the discussion of the economic consequences, which contains practically nothing

that has not already been said. Statements like the following, that the "practical emancipation [of the serf] was won by the popular rising of 1381", require revision in the light of recent research. It is to be regretted that the opportunity of a new edition was not utilized by the author to correct certain defects which previous reviewers had pointed out. He accepts, without sufficient investigation, the statement of the *History of Shrewsbury* (which is itself based on an inadequate interpretation of Trevisa), that the increased use of the English language instead of the French in the schools and in society was due chiefly to the pestilence. His view that the Great Pestilence formed an epoch in the history of English architecture (pp. 235-236), is surely based on an inadequate foundation. His statements regarding the disastrous effect on the clergy, on the other hand, are better founded; although he goes rather too far in the assumption that "the whole ecclesiastical system was wholly disorganized . . . and everything had to be built up anew". And, in our opinion, he has lost the proper historical perspective when he says of the Black Death: "It formed the real close of the medieval period and the beginning of our modern age. It produced a break with the past, and was the dawn of a new era."

GEORGE KRIEHN.

*The Political History of England.* Edited by WILLIAM HUNT, D.Litt., and REGINALD L. POOLE, M.A. In twelve volumes. Volume IV. *The History of England from the Accession of Richard II. to the Death of Richard III., 1377-1485.* By C. OMAN, M.A., Chichele Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford. (London and New York: Longmans, Green and Company. 1906. Pp. xvi, 525.)

THE fourth volume of this well-known series has found in Professor Oman an able and a sympathetic author. The account of this intricate but interesting period is one for which his attainments are especially adapted, not only by reason of his previous original investigations, but also because he possesses a happy faculty of presenting the results in articulate English. In his lucid and well-balanced sentences, he achieves a result not too often attained in modern historiography: a pleasing literary style based upon sound original investigation.

The period covered is the century which of all others especially marks the transition from the medieval to modern times. Beginning with an account of the French wars during the first years of Richard II., the author then gives an excellent chapter on the Revolt in 1381, showing the results of his recently published monograph on this subject. He then recounts the Wycliffite movement and the disastrous Flemish crusade, Richard II.'s struggles with the Lords Appellant, his stroke